

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 7 1. A method of locating a linear defect on a photographic element, the element having a useful imaging width and the defect aligned with length of the element, comprising the steps of:
- a) exposing a region of the element to create a latent image which is substantially uniform across the useful imaging width of the element;
 - b) processing the latent image to produce a density signal;
 - c) sampling the density signal with a photometric device; and
 - d) analyzing the sampled density data for the presence of significant deviations aligned with the length of the element to locate the defect.
2. The method in claim 1, wherein the exposing step comprises exposing a plurality of regions, whereby the likelihood of locating defects is enhanced.
3. The method in claim 1, wherein the exposing step comprises exposing a multiplicity of exposure levels varying along the length of the element, whereby a linear defect may be localized in exposure.
4. The method in claim 1, wherein the analyzing step comprises averaging of samples aligned with the length of the element, whereby the significance of a nonuniformity is enhanced.
5. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the photographic element is a negative photographic film having a plurality of layers and the exposure is high enough to produce a latent image that is developable in all layers of the film.

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7. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the photographic element is a negative photographic film having a plurality of layers and the exposure is high enough to produce a latent image that is developable in all layers of the film and the exposure is low enough to produce a latent image that upon development allows detection of any additional density due to a defect.

8. The method claimed in claim 7, wherein the exposure is sufficient to produce a developed image that is 1.5 above D_{min} .

9. The method claimed in claim 1, further comprising the step of employing the location of the defect in processing a digital image derived from the photographic element.

10. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the photographic element is a film strip.

11. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the processing step employs a standard photographic process.

12. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the processing step employs an alternate photographic process.

13. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the processing step employs a dry photographic process.

15. The method claimed in claim 13, wherein the dry photographic process includes high pressure treatment.

17. The photographic element claimed in claim 16, wherein the photographic element is a negative photographic film having a plurality of layers and the exposure is high enough to produce a latent image that is developable in all layers of the film.

19. The photographic element claimed in claim 16, wherein the photographic element is a negative photographic film having a plurality of layers and the exposure is high enough to produce a latent image that is developable in all layers of the film and the exposure is low enough to produce a latent image that upon development allows detection of any additional density due to a defect.

20. The photographic element claimed in claim 19, wherein the exposure is sufficient to produce a developed image that is 1.5 above D_{min} .

22. The photographic element claimed in claim 16, wherein the photographic element includes a photosensitive layer that contains thermal developable chemistry.

24. The photographic element claimed in claim 16, wherein the photographic element is a film strip.